LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – ISSUES AND OPTIONS NOVEMBER 2017

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Overview

There are a number of underlying strategic movements happening, which are likely to have an impact on planning, some driven by technological changes. In brief these are:-

1. Two thirds of the population increase is driven by immigration and Brexit could well reduce the existing forecast population increase.
2. Companies tend to have shorter lifespans than previously, as their products become obsolete more rapidly. This results in employees having to move companies more often and as moving house is expensive and disruptive, commuting to work is likely to become more extensive.
3. Driverless cars are likely to encourage more extensive commuting.
4. Driverless cars are likely to result in fewer people owning cars as they can use the driverless cars as a cheap taxi service. This would relieve the pressure on parking and may even free up city centre space used for car parking.
5. Improving electronic communications may reduce the need for travel to work.
6. The increasing use of ecommerce will continue to impact on existing shopping trends and town centre facilities will need to reflect this in order to thrive.

My comments on the questions you pose are as follows:-

2.1a/b SDC can help the successful businesses by being as supportive as possible in providing land for their needs, so that they can expand and provide employment locally.

2.1c/d Where employment land is provided should, to some extend, be driven by market forces. It is pointless providing land where few employers wish to go (e.g.Sharpness).

2.1e/f More home working is inevitable and generally desirable, the main constraint has been poor braodband in many areas, but this is gradually being addessed. Rural diversification is necessary to keep the rural economy alive, but it needs to be done sensitively to avoid ugly development. The obvious types of rural diversification would include tourism, however there could well be a large range of small Internet based businesses, which could be run successfully in rural locations.

2.3a. There are relatively few developments aimed specifically at older people, such as retirement villages and/or bungalows. The aim should be for each reasonably sized settlement to have at least one so that people moving into these facilites do not have to move far from their existing areas and thus can maintain their social and support links. This would encourage the elderly to move house and therefore, in many cases, freeing up larger properties suitable for families.

3.1 Generally it is better to concentrate new housing near existing and proposed employment, however some new housing should be provided near existing smaller settlements to allow for organic growth. This policy would minmise car use and make public transport more viable. However, there is clearly some pressure for housing from people wishing to commute to Bristol. Therefore it may be sensible to allocate some land between the A38 and M5, near the railway

stations to fulfil this need. A further benefit is that a concentrated strategy would realise greater funding for infrastructure improvements, such as a resited station at Stonehouse.

3.3a-d The areas South of the District have already been allocated significant housing numbers and it would seem to be sensible to see how these impact on the communities before considering any further major developments. Employment land has been available at Sharpness for many years with little take up and that which has come about has provided fairly low grade employment. It would seem perverse to allow significant developments when the employmmet prospects are poor as is the infrastructure. If a major development were to be built in the Sharpness/Wanswell area this would be likely to include a shopping centre, which would cannibilise the existing shops in Berkeley.

3.5a/b If too much development is allowed around attractive small settlements it is likely to destroy the reason why people wish to live there, as the settlements would become increasingly unattractive.

For the reasons given above I support the development strategy Option 1, with development being concentrated near the existing main employment areas.